

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1537

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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TAGS: MASS, PFOR, FR, POL, SF

SUBJECT: FRENCH POLICY ON PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES AND SOUTH
AFRICA

REF: PARIS 4401

1. SUMMARY: REPLYING IN JOURNAL OFFICIEL TO WRITTEN
QUESTIONS BY COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST DEPUTIES, FRENCH FOREIGN
MINISTER JOBERT OUTLINED CURRENT FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH
AFRICA AND PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES, NOTING DISAPPROVAL OF
APARTHEID, ACKNOWLEDGING RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND
REITERATING INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO SELL ARMS TO GOP AND SAG
FOR EXTERNAL DEFENSE. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH RESPECT TO SOUTH AFRICA, JOBERT STATES: "FRANCE
DISAPPROVES OF INSTITUTIONALIZED RACIAL SEGREGATION," BUT
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MAINTAINS STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN

CONFORMITY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW. AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE, SOUTH AFRICA HAS THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE ITS OWN EXTERNAL DEFENSE AND TO ASSURE THE PROTECTION OF THE STRATEGIC ROUTE AROUND THE CAPE. IN THIS CONNECTION, FRANCE LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES HAS AGREED TO DELIVER WAR MATERIEL, BUT REFUSES TO FURNISH LIGHT ARMS FOR USE AGAINST AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. THIS POLICY, HE SAYS, HAS BEEN "STRICTLY APPLIED" FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.

3. WITH RESPECT TO PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN PROVINCES, JOBERT TAKES POSITION THAT THERE IS NOW NEW ORIENTATION IN FRENCH POLICY. FOR A LONG TIME, FRANCE HAS CONSIDERED THAT THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION CANNOT BE DENIED, BUT ONLY PORTUGAL, THE ADMINISTERING POWER, CAN TAKE ACTION IN THIS REGARD. IF FRANCE DID NOT CONSIDER ITSELF JUSTIFIED UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ACCORDING "RECOGNITION" TO MOVEMENTS OPERATING IN ANGOLA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND GUINEA BISSAU, JOBERT NOTED THAT AMILCAR CABRAL HAD NONETHELESS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO COME TO PARIS IN JULY 1972 FOR A UNESCO MEETING. IT IS INEXACT, HE ADDS, TO PRETEND THAT FRANCE IS AIDING PORTUGAL. IF FRANCE SELLS MILITARY MATERIEL TO PORTUGAL, IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THESE TRANSACTIONS ARE EXCLUSIVELY COMMERCIAL AND ARE LIMITED TO ARMS NECESSARY FOR PORTUGAL'S EXTERNAL DEFENSE IN ITS CAPACITY AS A MEMBER OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.

4. COMMENT: JOBERT'S STATEMENT ON FRENCH ARMS POLICY REPRESENTS NO CHANGE FROM THAT GIVEN EMBOFF EARLIER THIS YEAR BY QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR NON-FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN AFFAIRS (REFTEL). IN ADDITION, JOBERT'S STATEMENT IN ITS DISAPPROVAL OF APARTHEID AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION APPEARS TO BE ATTEMPT TO KEEP FRENCH OPTIONS OPEN WITH RESPECT TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK COMMUNITY. ADMITTEDLY, IN MILITANT AFRICAN CIRCLES IT WILL BE SEEN AS MINISCULE GESTURE. NONETHELESS, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH LONG-STANDING GOF RELUCTANCE TO INTERVENE IN MATTERS WHICH IS CHOSSES TO CONSIDER INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER SOVEREIGN COUNTRY. DECONTROL 12/31/74. STONE

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